

# Inside Wallops

National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
Goddard Space Flight Center  
Wallops Flight Facility, Wallops Island, Va.



Volume XX-08

Number 11

March 31, 2008

## Apollo Veterans Serve as Mentors

On the front row of the Pearl Young Theater at NASA Langley Research Center, Milt Silveira and Tom Modlin talk quietly while they wait for the start of a meeting where they will share their wisdom and experiences spanning four decades at NASA.

They are mentors to "resident" engineers, some that were not born when Silveira and Modlin were working on the Apollo program. Jerry Sterling, NASA Wallops Flight Facility and Theo Muench from Goddard Space Flight Center are among the group of engineers.

Others in the group are from Langley, Johnson Space Center, Glenn Research Center, and the Kennedy Space Center.

T. K. Mattingly, a former astronaut in the Apollo and space shuttle programs and himself a mentor, is the founder of the resident engineer program. "The only way to learn is by doing things," he said.

"We deliberately targeted folks to work on the Max Launch Abort System (MLAS) who had five to 10 years of experience. We wanted to let them have hands-on experience in designing something," Wilson said. "At the same time, we wanted to get their outside, fresh look at things."

After selecting at least two candidates from each of the five Centers involved, Roe and Wilson determined what the residents would do and assigned them to MLAS sub-leads. The engineers formed their own team to determine the test article's instrumentation and a timeline for MLAS, which is due to be tested in September at Wallops Island, VA.

"We wanted to give them tasks that were really important," Wilson says. "They are too valuable a resource for us to bring them here and have them make photocopies. It's an important piece of work, and we're taking a hands-off approach: 'You guys go and do it.'"

"It's amazing and almost surreal," said Gary Dittmore, Johnson Space Center. "We're working with the people who wrote the books (engineers study in college)."

"The younger engineers in the program are a lot smarter than we were, a lot better trained," says Silveira, pointing around the room at the group, most with laptops open, checking data or e-mail. "They have a lot better capability."

They also are aware of the differences in technology between the Apollo and Constellation programs.

"When we did an analysis, it took a long time," Silveira says. "We didn't have computers to use or programs already written for us. We're trying to remember what we did 40 years ago and why. What we're trying to do with the younger engineers is to keep them from making the same mistakes we made."

"These guys kind of keep us out of a ditch, based on lessons learned," Roe says of the Apollo-era engineers. "We've got guys like me with 25 years of experience working with guys with 40 years of experience. And then we've got guys with 5-10 years of experience working with both groups."

NASA's greatest investment is the next generation. NASA's most valuable resource is knowledge and experience. The MLAS project is yet another example of bridging the generation gap and NASA's commitment to the future.

## Our Newest Retirees

Four long-time NASA Wallops Flight Facility employees are joining the retiree ranks. Congratulations.....

**James Johnson**, Honeywell employee on the NENS contract, retired effective March 14 after 41 years of service. Johnson worked in NASCOM.

**Ray Stevens** retired effective today, March 31, with 27 years of government service. Stevens is a contract specialist in the Wallops Procurement office.

**Greg Smith** will retire April 1 with 35 years of government service. Smith is a technical manager in the Sounding Rockets Program office.

Effective April 3, **Lucille Fox** is retiring as the secretary for the Advanced Project Office with 41 years of government service.



Jerry Sterling during a balloon inflation test.

NASA Photo

Although officially an engineer in the Wallops Mechanical Systems Branch, Sterling has been detailed to work on a program that allows him to learn from the past while contributing to NASA's future. Prior to this assignment, Sterling supported the Balloon Program Office at Wallops.

"We're building a new rocket and crew vehicle," said Ralph Roe, director of the NASA Engineering and Safety Center (NESC).

## Science Mission Directorate Leadership Changes

NASA Administrator Michael D. Griffin has issued the following statement regarding the announcement that Dr. S. Alan Stern, NASA associate administrator for the Science Mission Directorate, has decided to leave the agency.

“Alan has rendered invaluable service to NASA as the Principal Investigator for the Pluto/New Horizons mission, as a member of the NASA Advisory Council, and as the associate administrator of the Science Mission Directorate. While I deeply regret his decision to leave NASA, I understand his reasons for doing so, and wish him all the best in his future endeavors.”

Griffin also announced that Dr. Edward J. Weiler, director of NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center will serve as interim associate administrator.

Weiler was appointed to Goddard in August 2004. Previously, he had served as the

associate administrator for the agency's Space Science Enterprise from 1998 to 2004.

Prior to his selection as associate administrator, Weiler served as the director of the Astronomical Search for Origins Program at NASA Headquarters in Washington.

He also served as the chief scientist for the Hubble Space Telescope from 1979 until 1998.

Weiler joined Headquarters in 1978 as a staff scientist and was promoted to the chief of the Ultraviolet/Visible and Gravitational Astrophysics Division in 1979.

“Though we regret Alan's departure, we are pleased to welcome Dr. Ed Weiler back to NASA HQ once again to assume the mantle of SMD leadership. With his experienced guidance, science at NASA will continue to thrive,” said Griffin.

## Congresswoman Speaks at WOW Luncheon



Photo by Jacob Owen

Rebecca Powell, Chairperson for the Women of Wallops (WOW), thanks Congresswoman Thelma Drake, (Va), who was the guest speaker for the WOW Women's Month luncheon on March 28.

## Meeting Maker Will Shut Down

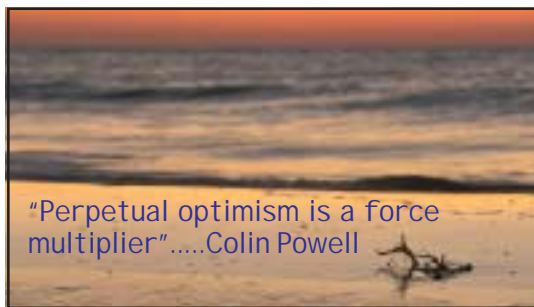


On May 1, NOMAD calendaring will become the official electronic calendar for Wallops and Meeting Maker will be removed from service.

Visit the NOMAD Web site for more information: <https://www.odin.lmit.com/gsfcnomad/calendaring.html> or contact the NOMAD project team at [gsfc-nomad-proj@lists.nasa.gov](mailto:gsfc-nomad-proj@lists.nasa.gov)



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## Wallops Shorts.....

### In the Field

NASA Sounding Rocket Operations Contract (NSROC) personnel are in New Mexico preparing for the launch of two Terrier-Black Brant sounding rockets from White Sands Missile Range.

A team from the Columbia Scientific Balloon Facility is at the launch complex in Ft. Sumner, N.M., preparing for the launch of two scientific balloons.

Aircraft Office personnel leave today on NASA's P3-B for Alaska to support the ARCTAS mission.

## The American Red Cross Blood Drive

April 9

9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Building F-3, Rocket Club

To schedule an appointment, register at: [www.givelife.org](http://www.givelife.org) (eDonor)

Code: Wallops

When you donate you will be entered to win a NASCAR Richard Petty Driving Experience.



For further information or if you don't want to schedule on-line, call the Health Unit at x1266.

## Contracting Officer Technical Representative (COTR) Refresher

April 8

8 a.m - Noon and/or 12:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Bldg. E2, Training Room.

Participants are required to take the SATERN training module at: <https://satern.nasa.gov/elms/learner/logout.do> This online training must be passed with a minimum of 70% prior to taking the COTR Refresher course. The online component and the instructor-led component are necessary to become certified as a COTR.

*Inside Wallops* is an official publication of Goddard Space Flight Center and is published by the Wallops Office of Public Affairs, Extension 1584, in the interest of Wallops employees. Recent and past issues of *Inside Wallops* also may be found at: <http://www.nasa.gov/centers/wallops/news/newsletters.html>

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